



Rother Local Strategic Partnership

better
by working **together**

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Annual Conference Report 2016

1. Background to the Rother Local Strategic Partnership and its Annual Conference

The Rother Local Strategic Partnership (RLSP) works with the Rother community and others to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Rother community and the quality of life of residents.

The Rother LSP Executive (core membership - see Appendix 1) meets four times throughout the year to organise an annual conference and take forward associated actions.

The Rother LSP Executive agreed that the theme of its annual Conference which was held on 13 July 2016 would be “**Creating and Developing Healthy Homes**”.

This report summarises the presentations and workshops from the annual Conference. The Rother LSP Executive will use the feedback from the event to identify any strategic needs or projects to take forward in 2016 and 2017.

2. The Conference – Summary

Members of the private/business, public and voluntary/community sector working for Rother residents were invited to participate in the Conference. The Chair, Martin Fisher, outlined the Rother LSP Executive’s reasons for identifying the Conference theme “Creating and Developing Healthy Homes”. He set the scene for the morning’s discussion and provided some key statistics on homelessness, access to housing and housing needs.

This opening speech was followed by four guest speakers who delivered presentations as follows:

- a) **Dr Tony Leonard** (Rother District Council)
Presentation outlined the services relating to housing which Rother District Council is responsible for and set out the challenges currently present in delivering these services
- b) **Angela Prickett** (AmicusHorizon)
Presentation set out some of the challenges facing Housing Associations in delivering services to their residents, and in particular in the delivery of new affordable housing.
- c) **Richard Watson** (Hastings & Rother Clinical Commissioning Group) **and Marie Jones** (East Sussex Fuel Poverty Co-Ordinator)
The aim of this presentation was to inform the audience of the affordable warmth issues facing vulnerable residents and the work being undertaken by the NHS, local authorities and the voluntary and community sector to tackle the issues.
- d) **Steve Wright** (East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service)

Presentation detailed some of the work being carried out by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESF&RS) to keep people safe in their homes.

Copies of all presentations are available at <http://www.rotherlsp.info/LSP2016>

3. Voluntary Sector Showcase

Short presentations were provided by 3 local voluntary sector organisations to showcase some of the innovative work being undertaken across the district. Copies of the presentations are available at <http://www.rotherlsp.info/LSP2016>

4. Conference Discussion Groups

At this point in the conference delegates split into three groups to discuss, as set out below:

Group 1 - Housing Needs – facilitated by AmicusHorizon

Facilitator – Angela Prickett

The group focused on:

- What factors do we need to consider in strategic planning for affordable housing?
- Where should resources be directed? Why?
- How can we meet the challenges facing us? What should we focus on?
- How can we work together to deliver more and meet needs more effectively?
- How do we involve people to develop constructive discussion?

Group 2 - Tackling Health & Wellbeing Issues related to cold homes

Facilitators – Richard Watson and Marie Jones

This group focused on:

- What is currently being done within your organisation to support vulnerable residents living in cold homes?
- What changes could be made to offer more advice and support to vulnerable residents living in cold homes?
- How can we involve you to make those changes?
- How do we involve people to develop constructive discussion?



Group 3 - Keeping People safe in the home



Facilitator – Steve Wright
This group focused on:

- What is vulnerability?
- What recourses are available via the Fire & Rescue Service?
- How can we work in Partnership to make people safer in their homes?

Feedback from all three discussion groups is available at appendix 2

5. The Chair's Reflections at the Conference

Martin Fisher, Chair of the Rother LSP reflected on some central points which were raised in the group sessions, summed up the event and identified some of the key issues and possible actions, which included:

- Considering how referrals between agencies work.
- Consider taking forward a housing forum designed to bring key players together to discuss and take forward opportunities for partnership working.
- Data sharing – taking forward ESF&RS and Adult Social Care (ASC) approach to data sharing to enable protection of vulnerable people.

The Rother LSP Executive Board will consider the outcomes highlighted in the conference report, which will be based on the central discussions held at the Conference and use these to set the action plan and programme for the coming year. **Report Ends**

Appendix 1

Core Membership (RLSP Executive)

The core membership is made up of decision makers from the following organisations:

- Rother Voluntary Action (Martin Fisher, Chair of the RLSP)
- Rother Transport Action Group (Cllr Ian Hollidge)
- Rother District Council (Cllr Martin Kenward)
- East Sussex County Council (Cllr Carl Maynard)
- Rother District Council (Brenda Mason)
- Sussex Police (Inspector Dan Russell)
- East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (Julie Gilbert-King)
- Sussex Coast College (Dan Shelley)
- NHS Hastings & Rother Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) (Richard Watson)

The administration and support work of the Rother LSP is provided by members of the Programme Office and Policy Team within Rother District Council. Further information about the core membership, including meeting dates can be found at: <http://www.rotherlsp.info/>

Appendix 2: Workshops

Helping People to Stay Safe in the Home

Question: What is vulnerability?

In addition to those categories identified in Steve Wright's presentation, participants identified the following additions:

- AmicusHorizon identified Young People with children in their properties and there was some agreement from participants that young householders (including first time tenancies) could lack knowledge about caring for their home, fire risk etc that could make them more vulnerable.
- AmicusHorizon would class anyone who they house as vulnerable, including financial. This also includes the list produced by ESF&RS colleagues in their presentation.
- AmicusHorizon identify that their tenants who have a fire in their property lose everything as most don't have insurance.
- Caravan Park residents – specifically mentioned were people living on a caravan site as their permanent address.
- Especially important in Rother is Rurality. An example was given by the ESF&RS that, based on the amount of time it took for the fire service or other emergency services to reach a property over a certain amount of time, there was an increased risk of serious harm.
- No fixed abode.
- People who find access to services difficult because English is not their first language.
- Residents who are considered vulnerable by the energy providers – both UK Power and Network have a list.
- Residents of the Orangery who have additional care needs.
- Unpaid carers.
- Victims of scams
 - Fire safety checks reminder email.
 - Leaflets distributed by Neighbourhood Watch.
- Anyone who hasn't got a smoke alarm is as vulnerable as anyone on the list.

Question: How can we work in Partnership to make people safer in their own homes?

- Partnership working with AmicusHorizon.
- AmicusHorizon carry out personal evacuation plans for people with disabilities. It would be useful to know if they do this for other vulnerable residents, and if not could they?
- AmicusHorizon and ESF&RS used to provide joint landlord checks. This was very positive in the past but AmicusHorizon do not run these now. However, perhaps this could be included in one of the three visits AmicusHorizon make to tenants as part of their starter tenancy. AmicusHorizon confirmed that further work could be carried out with tenants on starter tenancies.

- There is a massive amount of learning from the data sharing agreement between East Sussex County Council's ASC and ESF&RS to enable them to share personal data on vulnerable residents.
 - This process has taken a significant amount of time and now forms part of a legal agreement. Participants asked if this is a process that could be shared with GPs.
 - ESF&RS has data through a software model that is based on geographical areas and age of population, but this does not provide specific addresses for resources to be targeted to.
 - It was suggested that GPs could, under their social prescribing model, refer patients on to ESF&RS for fire safety checks and to other agencies based on their vulnerability.
 - In addition, it was also suggested that a partnership agreement could be put in place to enable data sharing that was compliant with the Data Protection legislation.
- Make a list of organisations that will refer or share information.
 - Identify locations for drop-in information sessions where vulnerable residents attend for other activities e.g. post office, village or local shop, pharmacies.
- The company that manufactures wireless smoke alarms can download data to find out how many activations are made. In the future, this might enable households with lots of activations to be targeted for resources.
- Partner agencies need to be kept informed of technological changes e.g. AmicusHorizon is looking to purchase some of the new fire safety technology for tenants who repeatedly have fires in AmicusHorizon properties.
- Concern was expressed about the vulnerability of tenants within the Private Rented Sector (PSR). They may be considerably more vulnerable than Social Housing tenants as Housing Associations adhere to quality standards as there is not the same system in place in the PRS. The Fire service say legislation leaves the responsibility with the landlord.
- A targeted process for households who have a child with disabilities to access fire safety checks needs to be put in place e.g. further work with Glyne Gap School.
- RDC Emergency Planning Officer and Parish Councils to ensure that list of vulnerable residents are included in the Emergency Plan for each Parish so that these households can be prioritised for resources in an emergency (e.g. flooding or power failure) and for fire safety, cold homes, emergency services etc.
- Visitors to homes from all agencies should remind vulnerable residents about fire safety checks.

- The following organisations were identified who could/might support the dissemination of information about services e.g. free fire safety checks for the vulnerable :
 - Lions Club
 - Town Team Bexhill
 - Bexhill Caring Community
 - Action in Rural Sussex
 - Rother Voluntary Action and associated neighbour schemes
 - Friends, Family and Travellers – have provided information to their clients for the carers organisations
 - One Space
 - Association of Carers
- ESF&RS has a free care provider's scheme, i.e. there is a free service if the unpaid carers are referred by an agency into the scheme.
- ESF&RS has offered to provide awareness sessions/training for any organisation that would like staff who visit homes to be able to make an assessment around vulnerability and refer these on to other agencies.
- Environmental Health Services can offer a wide range of assessment for residents within the Private Rented Sector. Assessments not only focus on excessive cold or damp but checks can be made for other hazards connected to falls, slips in the bath, issues to do with falls and window safety etc.
- New-build properties and extensions now all have to have a hard wired smoke alarm, which has to have an annual maintenance check. We could be moving to the model adopted in wales where all new-builds have to have a sprinkler system.

Tackling Health and Wellbeing Issues related to Cold Homes

Participants were asked to share what current activities their organisations offer to combat fuel poverty/improve homes to be safe and healthy?

- Events, advice services, talks to students, talks to other agencies, home visits, leaflets.
- Regulatory services with legal powers, powers are making referrals/signposting and holding public meetings.
- Services available discuss people's incomes and debt/benefit advice.
- Schemes to transfer to cheaper energy providers.
- Home visits (including Police) that can generate referrals into the East Sussex Winter Home Check service.
- Signposting to services including into the Winter home check service

- Training offered to frontline staff (suggested through workshops).
- Debt advice.
- Referrals to Environmental Health on cold and damp housing.
- Building and maintaining homes to high standard to reduce bills/running costs.
- Take information to distribute at our events.
- Newsletters.
- Research on unsuccessful hospital discharges.

Participants were encouraged to share what key issues and barriers they have identified to their activity?

- Some residents don't always follow up referrals or don't feel able to help themselves.
- Tenants are fearful of retaliatory eviction if they complain about their rental property.
- Currently new housing is not being built to the Passivhaus standard, a missed opportunity to get low energy use homes built.
- Concern that New-builds, will they be low energy use enough? There is an opportunity to future proof developments which would be a wiser option.
- Can be confusing where to go for help and advice and who to refer individuals in to on issues of fuel poverty, unsure of who are the trustworthy organisations (fuel switching).
- Key meters pushed as only option, (sometimes by landlords, sometimes by energy companies, the householder does not often see them as an optional attachment, but in many cases these increase debt.
- Low level of awareness on key/pre-payment meters, for example they are transferable debt - the debt is on the meter not the person.
- Police service may wish to know more need to know more about other agencies, what they offer, how to access.
- Some people would appreciate some additional support if they are not confident readers or fluent enough in English (written and conversational), and some depend on family/friends to translate information for them. Affordability of rent – increasing gap between housing benefit and market rates leaves less little funds for heating.
- Universal credit – can increase the risk of debt for those who need additional support with budgeting
- People returning to hospital because discharged to cold homes, not eating, malnutrition.

Participants were asked to consider what changes could be made to improve the provision and support from services to address fuel poverty?

- Awareness raising, more visits between agencies, briefing of, frontline staff
- Knowledge – who do you know? – sharing information
- Updating our websites to signpost to what is on offer e.g. Winter Health Check.
- Pool resources to avoid a duplication of efforts.

- Share good practice and good ideas between agencies involved – talk together.
- Reply to Government consultation on fuel poverty.
- Professional curiosity: in homes be observant; ask people if they want more information on anything you identify as a possible cause to refer.
- Make the issue of fuel poverty visible at our events and in newsletters ready for winter. Education – life-skills that residents need, there are some good booklets on managing cold and damp available they should be further distributed.
- Include fuel poverty, healthy homes leaflets in training packs for frontline staff.
- Publicise offers to come and talk to any group of staff or volunteers.
- Publicise on “My Alerts” the Keep Well, Keep Warm, top 10 tips, consider neighbours not online.
- Police work more closely with Fire Service.
- Building more affordable homes, Passivhaus standards, zero carbon, fuel efficient homes.
- Refer patients to the winter home check service to avoid People returning to hospital because discharged to cold homes, not eating, malnutrition
- Refer cases to the winter home check service if there are problems with: black mould and condensation due to leaks, wet clothes left to dry on radiators, poor ventilation or short bursts of heat.
- New-builds, need to be sufficiently low energy use to help address fuel poverty.

The workshop could be summed up by one very positive comment: We all have to work together for the wellbeing and safety of Rother residents

Housing Needs

What factors do we need to consider in strategic planning for affordable housing?

- Who is going to deliver affordable housing in future? – the private sector, including developers/house builders as well as registered providers all need to be engaged.
- Finding the land – dependent on a plan-lead system to deliver 400+ homes a year in Rother – a key driver.
- Successful mechanisms for delivery – affordable housing planning policy and exception site policy to deliver new homes.
- Understanding what sites need to come forward – a key piece of work undertaken by planning to allocate suitable sites.
- Demography – older people and need for smaller accommodation.
- Thinking about regeneration aspirations to meet affordable housing demands, as well as meeting wider benefits – what sites could come forward to increase net inward and out migration? – how do we keep/attract younger families here?

- Scheme viability – understanding need in conjunction with what can be delivered.
- Starter homes – could also help to some extent.
- Consider ways to prioritise all housing tenures for local people (not just affordable housing).

Where should resources be directed and why?

- Collaborative discussions – forums and discussions are already happening with developers (see below).
- Developers East Sussex Forum – via the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) <http://www.southeastlep.com/activities/housing> is about bringing together developers across East Sussex. Graham Peters is the LEP contact.
- Financial/other incentives to downsize with a view of building homes to meet needs and aspirations ie smaller one, and two beds to incentivise moving to free up larger stock for families.
- Shared accommodation for young people who are restricted by single room rate.
- Building within communities where homes are required, and are supported.
- Working with the exception site project and supporting Parish Councils to set up Community Land Trusts.
- Promotion and education – a housing conference – launching the next stage of the Local Plan.
- Housing needs – putting more money into affordable rented accommodation for lower income households.

How can we meet the challenges facing us? What should we focus on?

- Prioritising delivery of older people's accommodation and younger people's accommodation.
- Thinking ahead – preventative measures such as impact of Brexit on certain communities/work forces. For example, the potential problem this will cause for agricultural workers if European workers suddenly disappear and there is no younger population locally to replace this workforce.
- Institutionalised large-scale private sector investment like in London to encourage longer-term tenancies and better quality of private rented stock.
- Engaging better with Parish Councils – an open transparent conversation to ensure the wider benefits of providing affordable housing in villages is widely understood.
- Develop a more positive image of where people are moving to and overcoming stereotypical views of those moving into affordable housing.
- Promoting community emphasis – to help each other – sharing households communal items/letting spare rooms.

- Bringing back the key workers initiative to help engage Parish Councillors.
- Understanding the needs of supported housing client groups – what provision is needed?
- Working more effectively with letting agents – changing perceptions.
- Improving infrastructure (such as transport) in rural areas to enable elderly and other more vulnerable groups to live in rural communities, where housing becomes available.
- Improved use of technology and social media – advertising spare rooms within private/social rented sectors for young people. Using existing Choice Based lettings scheme to advertise voids (for housing options cases and not just housing register cases, where properties are not let first time round).
- Changing culture – ie in university towns it is more widely accepted that private rental is for house sharing. This is often not the case elsewhere, even though a need for house sharing exists among the younger population.

How can we work together to deliver more and meet needs more effectively?

- Understand the efficiencies to be gained by working collaboratively with key players/other organisations, working towards a shared vision.
- Thinking more innovatively – ie working with employers to support housing, ie paying deposits for rentals – linking employment and housing and other areas.

How do we involve people to develop constructive discussion?

- Find/develop a forum that is taking forward a wider plan and understanding as individuals, how we can contribute towards this vision, and how efficiencies can be gained by working together collaboratively.

Appendix 3

Rother LSP Annual Conference – Wednesday, 13 July 2016

Attendee List

Organisation	Delegate Name
1066 Country Federation of Small Businesses	Lord Brett McLean
AmicusHorizon	Vanessa Biddiss
AmicusHorizon	Angela Prickett
Bexhill Environmental Group	Barbara Echlin
Bexhill Town Team	Hillary Randall
Care for the Carers	Sue Munson-Reid
Christians Against Poverty	Ros Thomas
Churches Together in Bexhill	Carol Thomas
East Sussex Better Together	Michelle Crouch
East Sussex Better Together (Housing Sub-Group)	Jessica Haines
East Sussex County Council	Sarah Feather
East Sussex County Council	Beth McGhee
East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service	Steve Wright
East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service	John Owen
East Sussex Fuel Poverty	Marie Jones
Hastings Advice and Representation Centre	Teresa Andrews
Little Gate Farm	Claire Cordell
Hastoe Group	Deniz Erdogan
Locate East Sussex	Philip Johnson
NHS Hastings & Rother CCG	Richard Watson
NHS Hastings & Rother CCG	Roger Simmons
Rother District Council	Dr Tony Leonard
Rother District Council	Brenda Mason
Rother District Council	Cllr Mrs Joy Hughes
Rother District Council	David Marlow
Rother District Council	Richard Wilson
Rother District Council	Tim Hickling
Rother District Council	Kate Watson
Rother District Council	Simon Edwards
Rother District Council	Alison Spring
Rother District Council	Cheryl Poole
Rother District Council	Marie Kennedy
Rother District Council	Carol Studley
Rother District Council	Joanne Wright

Rother District Council	Amy Fearn
Rother Neighbourhood Watch	Ted Kemp
Rother Race Action Forum	Linda Seddon
Rother Seniors Forum	Ron Sunderland
Rother Transport Action Group	Cllr Ian Hollidge
Rother Voluntary Action	Martin Fisher
Rother Voluntary Action	Jan Cutting
Rye Area Community Transport	Tony Moore
South East Local Economic Partnership & Team East Sussex	Graham Peters
Sussex Coast College	David Pine
Sussex Community Development Association	Ruairi McCourt
Sussex Police	Insp Daniel Russell
The Pelham Trust	Ollie Jeffs
Total 42	